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SEASONING ACCESSORIES

Using seasoning material is an art that good cooks acquire from practice. Much can be done to keep the daily fare from growing monotonous by the use of even a very few spices and home-dried herbs. A bay leaf or a sprig or two of dried thyme is sufficient to season the gravy for a pot roast, a stew, or a creamed meat or fish dish. (Bay leaf should always be removed from food before serving.) Sage is a well-known seasoning for beef, salt pork, or cheese, and for meat and poultry stuffings, but it should be used in small quantities.

The flavor of cloves goes well with smoked meats such as ham or smoked shoulder. Whole cloves and stick cinnamon, like bay leaf, should be removed before serving. For variety, powdered or root ginger may be used in boiling or pot-roasting meat and in seasoning cooked tongue. A very small quantity of nutmeg or mace is a pleasing addition occasionally to scalloped fish or oysters.

Curry powder, used sparingly, is good with almost any meat or fish dish and with eggs, especially when these protein foods are combined with rice or another cereal. Mustard adds flavor to cheese dishes, ham, fresh pork, beef, and mutton, also to salad dressings.

When not used in the meat, fish, or cheese dish of a meal, some of these seasonings add variety to vegetables or to soup. Cloves or bay go well with tomato soup. Nutmeg or mace is often used in spinach, carrots, or pickled beets. Mashed sweetpotatoes seasoned with cinnamon or nutmeg are a

favorite dish in some parts of the country.

Onions, garlic, celery, parsley, canned tomatoes, lemons, and bacon fat and other meat drippings, although all are foods rather than accessories, are useful, too, in making inexpensive dishes attractive. The tops of celery, both fresh and crisp or dried and powdered, are excellent for seasoning. Parsley is easy to grow in the garden or in a window-box or flowerpot. It can be used fresh or dried. Its flavor combines effectively with egg, meat, and vegetable dishes. A thin slice of lemon provides pleasing flavor in stewed apples, prunes, black bean soup, or kidney stew.

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